A

LETTER

FROM A

Minister in *Norfolk*

TO HIS

PARISHIONERS:

SHEWING A

Christian's Duty,

I. *Toward God.*
II. *Toward his Governours.*
III. *Toward his Neighbours.*
IV. *Toward himself and his Family.*

LONDON:
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My Dear Brethren!

HAving lately diſperſed among you the *Paſtoral Letter* which, purſuant to the Arch-Biſhop's Advice to all the Clergy under his Charge, was Publiſhed by ſome Worthy *Miniſters* about *Bedford* and *Buckingham*. I thought I cou'd not better expreſs my regard to their Pious Example, the direction of my Superiors, and the good of your Souls; than by following it with ſome particular Inſtructions of my own, about the means of ſecuring your Eternal Salvation, which I hope that Excellent Letter has awakened you to a due Senſe of, and Concern for:

And this I ſhall do, by offering you ſome ſhort Rules for the ordering your Behaviour.

I. Toward God.
II. Toward your Governors.
III. Toward your Neighbours.
IV. Toward your Selves and Family.

The whole of your behaviour toward God may be conſidered under that which we call the Worſhip of him, and you have been ſo often inſtructed in the great reaſonableneſs of paying him this, upon the account of his Adorable Attributes of Power, Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Juſtice, Mercy, Truth, as well as your own derivation from him, and continual dependance on him; that I ſhall ſuppoſe you fully perſuaded of the Duty, and only endeavour to lead you on to the due and acceptable performance of it.

Begin then in the Morning as ſoon as you are up, to Adore the Gracious Providence and Mercy of God, for having preſerved you from the dangers of the Night, refreſhed you with ſleep, and for bringing you in view of another Day; conſider what is likely to be the buſineſs of it, as long as you have it, what dangers of cut-

ing it off, or ſuffering in it, you may meet with, and what temptations you may be expoſed to; what Evils you are to avoid, and what Good you may and ought to do; whoſe Welfare and Happineſs you are to pray for, as a Member of the Catholick Church, and this particular Branch of it, as a Subject of this Kingdom, as a Parent, Maſter, or Miſtreſs of a Family, Child or Servant.

Warm your Souls with due Apprehenſions of the infinite Power, Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, manifeſted in the Creation and Preſervation of the World; but eſpecially affect your ſelves with a deep ſenſe of his inexpreſſible Mercy, in ſending his only Son to repair the decays of our fallen Nature, and thro' his Meritorious Sufferings and all-ſufficient Righteouſneſs, offering to be reconciled to us miſerable Sinners:

Prepare your Hearts to pray for this acceptance with him, by humble thoughts of your own unworthineſs, and the conſideration of your Saviour's powerful interceſſion for you at God's right hand. And then before any worldly Cares intrude to divert you, retire by your ſelves, and reverently on your Knees, with ſerious attention and hearty Affection, perform your *Morning Devotions.*

When that is over, remember that you are to avoid thoſe Temptations you have prayed againſt, and to practiſe to the utmoſt of your power, thoſe Vertues and Graces you have asked for: Then follow your Vocation and Buſineſs, in Truth and Righteouſneſs, in which whilſt you are honeſtly employ'd, you cannot want proper Matter for Holy Thoughts and Ejaculations: Almoſt every thing that occurs to your Obſervation, will give you freſh occaſion to admire the Excellency and Perfections of the Divine Being. Even the Plow-man and Day-labourer has conſtant Objects before him, to raiſe his Veneration of God, by beholding the Frame and continuance, the Beauty and Uſe of his Creatures, from the Sun in the Heavens, to the Duſt on the Earth.

And ſuch a care to turn all that occurs in the Day, to this Religious Uſe, will keep you from a croud of vain and trifling Thoughts, and be the beſt preparation for your

your *Evening-Devotion*, which you ought not to omit the performance of in private, tho' you have joyn'd in Family-Prayer; for beſides this, you muſt be alone, to recollect your particular Failings, Paſſions and Miſcarriages, what Dangers you have eſcaped, what good you have received, eſpecially as to your Spiritual concerns, think of theſe things, and make them the ſubject of your ſerious meditation, that you may diſpoſe your Souls to a holy and acceptable offering up of your Evening-Sacrifice, and when that duty is over, compoſe your ſelves to reſt under the hopes of its being accepted, caſting all your Care upon him who careth for you, and who alone is able to make you ſleep and dwell in ſafety.

In the conſtant practice of theſe private Duties, you are to go on to the more ſolemn Exerciſe of your Religion in the Publick Worſhip of God. To which, *Time* and *Place* are ſo neceſſary, and they are ſo well provided for by the Excellent Order of our Church, that I cannot doubt but you approve the Appointment: And tho' to the ſorrow of all good Men, Piety and Devotion are fallen ſo low, that we cannot prevail on the generality of People to ſpare ſo much time from their Worldly Affairs, which yet conſtantly need the Bleſſing of God, as to joyn in his Worſhip the Weeks of *Lent*, and thoſe few *Holy-days* we have in the Year: And tho' we can much leſs hope to perſuade them to a *daily* attendance on the Service of the Church; yet it is much to be wiſhed, they wou'd be induced to be more frequently at it, and I will hope that of you, both in order to the better ſucceſs of your temporal Concerns, and the better preparing your ſelves, for a due obſervance of the *Lord's Day*, which is ſo ſmall a part of your time, that the Profanation of it will be the greater Reproach, and a higher Contempt of thoſe Laws both of God and Man, which require it to be kept *Holy*.

That you may ſo keep it, do not over-burden your ſelves with buſineſs on the Saturday-Night, but get a little more than ordinary leiſure for your Evening-Meditations and Prayers, and go to your reſt in good

time, that you may be the better enabled to be early in the Duties of the approaching Day; begin it with grateful reflections upon the Creation and Redemption of the World, the Fruits and Benefits of our Saviour's Reſurrection to all faithful Chriſtians, of which this Day is deſigned for a weekly Commemoration, and let theſe thoughts enlarge your Private Devotion. When that is perform'd, and the neceſſary affairs of your Family are put in order, ſet your Children and Servants to Reading the *Holy Scriptures*, the *Whole Duty of Man*, or ſome other good Book, to diſpoſe them to be the more ſerious at Church; and then go with them thither, that you may be all there at the beginning of Divine Service. Leave all your Worldly Cares and Thoughts behind, and carry no Dogs with you to the defiling of that Holy Place, or the diſturbance of the Congregation. When you enter into the Church humbly on your knees adore that God, into whoſe more immediate Preſence you come: Offer your hearty thanks for the bleſſing of another Opportunity of making your Publick Addreſſes to him; beg that his Grace may accompany your Prayers, and ſo aſſiſt your Miniſter in the diſcharge of his Office, that it may be to the benefit of all the Congregation. Joyn in the *Confeſſion*, *Lord's Prayer*, *Creed*, and the ſhort *Suffrages* as the Rubrick directs in a grave and reverent manner, not with an over-loud voice, but ſo as to be conveniently heard, do not repeat the *Abſolution* which belongs to the Miniſter only, but hearken attentively to it, and ſilently joyn in the Petition for Repentance at the end of it. Let your Thoughts rather than your Voice go along with your Miniſter in the other *Collects*, but be ſure to avoid being heard repeating before him, to the interruption of your Neighbour's Devotion, and perhaps the hindrance of your Miniſter too; do nothing to be greatly obſerv'd, but be an Example only of modeſt and humble attention, maintaining a conſtant ſeriouſneſs thro' every part of the Service, without affectation. Shut out as much as is poſſible, all wandring Thoughts, and to that end take care to avoid all wandring

dring behaviour; do not look out for occasion to make salutations, nor give any in the time of your Prayers; let it not be your business to observe who comes into the Church, nor what dress they have on; never allow your self in idle gazing about, or needless whispering to any; nor on the other hand give way to supineness and sleep: But consider who it is you are presented before, and what business you are assembled about. Remember that God, and his Holy Angels observe you, and that your Eternal Welfare is the matter in hand. Think how hard it is with all your care to keep your Souls in that Frame they shou'd be, and how much therefore it stands you in stead, to take all that you can, and to render these approaches to God as effectual as possible, to those Excellent Ends, for which you are required to make them.

When the Publick Worship of the Day is ended in this regular manner, take care that the rest of the time be employ'd in things that are suitable to it, such as the Offices of Charity, whether by Alms, or visiting the Sick, or those who want your Comfort, Advice, or Reproof; endeavouring that all your Conversation with others on this Day especially, may tend to their improvement in some Christian Grace and Knowlege or other. Let there be Reading in your Families in the Evening, as was advised in the Morning, and let an account be taken of what has been read and heard that Day, that both Readers and Hearers may be the better for it, and let a Prayer for the Blessing of God upon the whole, be added to the Evening-Devotion that is to conclude this Day.

But over and above the constant Duties upon the ordinary returns of this Day: The Celebration of the Lord's Supper is appointed to be had upon some Sundays and other Solemn Days; as it is always upon the three great Festivals, of *Christmas-Day*, *Easter-Sunday* and *Whit-Sunday*, in memory of our Blessed Saviour's *Nativity*, *Resurrection*, and the coming of the *Holy Ghost*. And therefore against these, a greater preparation is required; in order to their being duly observed, some time

must be set apart before, for a strict examination of your Hearts and Lives, for the Humble Confession of your Sins, and Expression of Sorrow for them, for imploring the Mercy of God in the Pardon of them, and for settling your resolutions of forsaking them. For these Ends, you ought to read over by your selves the *Psalms*, *Lessons*, *Epistles* and *Gospels*, on those Solemn Occasions, which will raise in your Minds due apprehensions of those great things God has wrought for your Souls, and furnish you with Meditations suitable to the work you are going about, such as will make it a Blessing to you. What I have here advised, about your reading part of the Divine Service at home, upon these particular Occasions, is useful to be practised upon all other Opportunities, as you can never hope to put up your Prayers in Publick, or hear the Word of God at any time to so good an Effect, as when you have considered before-hand what it is you are to hear, and pray for.

And for your further help in these matters, I refer you to some of those Excellent Discourses that have been Published about the Holy Communion and other Religious Duties, which you either have by you, or may upon easy terms be supply'd with: And God grant you may take care to fix them well in your Minds, and follow those Pious Directions, with that Seriousness and Affection which become Christians convinced of the value of their Immortal Souls, and the reasonableness of giving all diligence to make their Calling and Election sure, by a devout application of themselves, to all the parts of their Religion, that are set before them, as means to it, or pledges of it: Always remembring, that the end of Religion, is to make you better in the whole course of your Lives and to direct your behaviour in every Relation in which you stand in this World; as I am to shew you in the next place how it is to be ordered.

2. Toward your Governours; and here I must begin with the King who is your Supreme Governour upon Earth, both in Church and State, to whom I hope you will not be the less dutiful, either for those civil dissen-

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ſions that have been amongſt us ſince his reigning over us, or for the impoſition of Taxes that have been upon us. Differences about Civil Obedience have been in all Reigns, and I fear always will be, as we cannot expect, that all Men ſhou'd either be of honeſt Deſigns, or of good Underſtanding in the grounds and nature of Government; tho' it is to be wiſhed that all Engliſh-men were in the frame of their own, for then they wou'd value their happineſs in living under ſo excellent a Conſtitution as this, and ſo good a Preſerver of it as His Majeſty is.

God is the Supreme Governour of the whole World, and all the Powers on Earth have ever been, and ſtill are, either by his actual Appointment, or over-ruling Providence, and to either of theſe kind of Powers, Obedience is due for his ſake, and by his Command, *Rom.* 13. *to this end, that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all Godlineſs and Honeſty.* And agreeable to this are the Laws of this Kingdom, 11 *Hen.* VII. and the particular Doctrine of this Church, (1 *Hom.* againſt Rebellion) which ought in all reaſon to ſilence the diſputes of Private People about the Titles of Princes, which they are not fit Judges of, and can come to no ſatisfaction about; if they will not acquieſce in the determination of thoſe to whom the Conſideration of ſuch things belong, as entruſted with the care and good of the Whole. As little reaſon is there to be uneaſy under the Government, upon the account of the Taxes, which are at all times more or leſs neceſſary to all Governments, and ſometimes they cannot be maintain'd without a great increaſe of the uſual Burden, which yet is light in compariſon of the Miſchiefs that wou'd otherwiſe follow. And if you, who profeſs to love your Country, and this Church of which you are Members, did impartially conſider, in how much worſe a condition both wou'd have been, had not His Majeſty undertaken, and gon thro' all that he has done for us; and had not this charge been upon us, you would ſee reaſon to bleſs God for having delivered you out of all your fears, at ſo little expence, inſtead of murmuring at what you have born, which is

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now wearing off, and from the occaſion of which, while it was at the higheſt, many parts of the Nation, and this among others receiv'd an advantage: But take things at the worſt, what proportion does that part of your preſent Revenue, which you have paid to the ſupport of the War, that is now ſo happily ended, bear to the ſeizing your Eſtates, the loſs of your Liberties, and the hazard at leaſt of your Lives for the ſake of Religion, and your keeping to a good Conſcience? All theſe things you know were greatly apprehended by the generality of the Nation, and not without evident reaſon. Nor cou'd we have eſcaped in any Humane appearance thoſe ſad Perſecutions under which many of a Neighbouring Nation have groaned, if God had not raiſed up the King to protect us, and diſpoſed the Body of the People to ſtand by him, till he accompliſhed the Peace. Since then ſo much has been wrought for you, and you ſee the fruits of your labour and charge in being ſettled in ſafety, defended in your Religion, and Governed by Laws of your own; I cannot but hope you will make His Majeſty's Government eaſie by paying him that Honour, his Actions for you, have procured him abroad, and doing what in you lies, to make his endeavours of promoting Piety and Vertue at home ſo proſperous and effectual, that there may be ſome ground to hope for the continuance of that Peace, which under God we owe to his Valour and Care. And unleſs you do this, there is reaſon to fear the Attempts which our Adverſaries of the Romiſh Superſtition are ſtill making upon us, who will take advantage of all your Diſcontents, neglects of God's Worſhip, and other Immoralities, to lead you into a more ſervile Subjection, a more formal way of Religion, and eaſier hopes of Pardon for Sin, all which will be your undoing. For the better prevention of this, let me adviſe you in the next place, to Obey them that have the Spiritual Rule among you, and *are over you in the Lord, and admoniſh you, and to eſteem them very highly in love for their work's ſake*, inaſmuch *as they watch for your Souls*. As the Biſhop under whoſe Inſpection you live, and the Miniſter to whom he has committed the particular Care of you,

you, and let it not offend you that I put my ſelf among your Governors, which I do not, as pretending to have *dominion over your Faith*, but as deſiring to be *a Helper of your Joy*. And this I cannot better promote, than by recommending to you a ſincere regard of him who is to Pray for you, and Inſtruct you in the Goſpel of Chriſt, who is to Adminiſter thoſe Sacraments to you, from which you hope for Salvation, and to direct, aſſiſt and comfort you upon the Bed of Sickneſs, and at the Hour of Death. Sure you need not be perſuaded to do Juſtice at leaſt, to a Perſon in this Office among you, nor deſired not to think the worſe of me for Exhorting you to pay him his Due, without difficulty, or tempting him to go to Law for that maintenance without which he cannot do his Duty among you, and which he cannot recover this way, without drawing ſome prejudice upon his Holy Vocation. Conſider this for your own as well as his ſake, and prevent the many Evils which muſt follow your endeavouring to defraud him of what is as much his Right, as any thing elſe is your own. Be ſo far from this, as to make a convenient proviſion for him over and above what he can claim as a Debt, if your Lot ſhou'd fall in a Pariſh, where very ſmall Legal Proviſion is made, as it is even to the requiring your pity in moſt Market-Towns. When this is your Caſe, follow the Example of *London*, which among other marks of its Glory is to be praiſed for this, that it makes a decent Proviſion for thoſe Miniſters that labour among them, and by that means is furniſhed with ſuch, as every way deſerve their reward. Let another part of your ſupporting your Miniſter be the care of his Reputation, which cannot be leſſened, but you will alſo be ſufferers by it, and in the more honour he is, the more good he will be able to do you. Of this all Religions have ever been ſenſible, and it wou'd therefore be the greateſt reproach of our Church, if her Members ſhould ſtand by themſelves, in ſinking, or ſo much as neglecting the Credit of thoſe who are to officiate among them in things pertaining to God. Shou'd you be ſo unfortunate as to live under a Miniſter, who did not walk according to his Character,

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ſhew your concern by a friendly telling him of it alone with Meekneſs and Fear; if he does not reform upon this, take two or three Witneſſes with you that are ſober and ſerious, and if notwithſtanding all this, he perſiſts in his courſe, acquaint his Governours with it in a regular manner, and deſire their Cure of ſuch an Offence. All good Men of the Order will commend you for this, if you do not in the mean time ſhew a Prejudice to the Doctrine he teaches, and carry your diſlike of his perſonal Conduct to the Office he bears, and all thoſe that act in the ſame.

This wou'd be very unreaſonable, conſidering he is a Man like your ſelves, and perhaps of greater infirmities, which do not really leſſen the buſineſs that is committed unto him. And it wou'd be very unjuſt to form a judgment of the reſt of his Profeſſion from him; ſince no other Order of Men do think themſelves fairly repreſented from the private miſcarriages of ſome particular Perſons among them. Conſider the end of your Miniſter's buſineſs, and you will never treat him to the hindrance of that, nor give others encouragement to deſpiſe his Commiſſion; becauſe he does not always Diſcharge it, in that manner he ſhou'd, but you will preſerve his Authority by all Charitable covering, or excuſing his Faults, that ſome good may come of it to you and your Neighbours, tho' he ſhou'd not happen to be the better for it himſelf. And ſo I proceed to the next Part of my Advice, which concerns your Behaviour.

3. Toward your Neighbours. Under which Character, you are to Treat all thoſe whom the Providence of God ſhall at any Time bring in your way, as far as the Offices of Humanity, and Chriſtian Charity go; but you are more eſpecially to look upon as your Neighbours thoſe who live near you, in the ſame Pariſh, or with whom you have frequent Intercourſe in the Affairs of your Life; towards whom that you may conduct your ſelves as you ought, you muſt in the Firſt Place, ſtudy to be quiet, and to do your own Buſineſs, as the beſt means of keeping you from doing Evil, and enabling you to do

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Good to thoſe about you; and that you may be ſtill the ſurer to do no Evil to them, take care not to think of any of them, beyond the plain evidence of Things, and never allow your ſelves to aggravate that. Speak evil of no Man, how juſtly ſoever, but when a good and charitable, and almoſt indiſpenſable Occaſion requires it. Bear little Injuries, and do not return Evil for the greateſt, beyond the neceſſity of a juſt Defence; give no heed to Tale-bearers, or Buſy-bodies in other Mens Matters, but diſcourage as much as you can, all invidious Whiſperings and Backbitings; to be ſure repeat none to the kindling of Strife, but quench all the ſparks of it, wherever you find they ariſe, and heal what Breaches you can, by ſoftning things on both Sides, and working the diſpleaſed Parties to a Temper of Love and Reconciliation. Diſpoſe all you Converſe with, to do juſtly by one another, and do juſtly by all Men your ſelves, that you may neither give occaſion to Quarrels, nor ſuffer any to begin, where you can poſſibly prevent it. Give the Labourer his Hire, and pay all, what by any kind of Right becomes their due, defraud no Man, do wrong to none, either in their Eſtates, Relations, or Names; but do unto all Men, as you wou'd they ſhou'd do unto you, giving none any juſt Reaſon to complain of you. *If it be poſſible, as much as lieth in you live peaceably with all Men.* But let not your fear of offending, hinder you from giving any of your Brethren a neceſſary Reproof in a Chriſtian way, or from bringing him to Puniſhment, if he will not be reclaim'd by kind Admonition: Be not afraid of being call'd Informers, when the Eternal Good of your Neighbours that are Faulty, and the Peace and Comfort and Vertue of thoſe that are innocent, are nearly concern'd; ſome Vices are not to be born, and their going without any reſtraint will ſpread the Infection; diſcover and convict ſuch, as you wou'd a Theif or a Murderer, in whoſe Neighbourhood, you cannot be ſafe. *If a Man indeed be overtaken in a fault, reſtore ſuch a one in the Spirit of Meekneſs, conſidering your ſelves leſt you alſo be tempted.* But ſuffer not the Holy Name of God to be Blaſphemed, or boldly Profaned in your preſence, with-

out expreſſing your juſt diſlike and abhorrence of it; by ſuch Reprehenſion, as the Circumſtances of Places and Perſons will bear, and Accuſing thoſe to the Magiſtrate, as will not be ſo corrected: Nor let the Adulterer, or Whoremonger go on without due Cenſure, for ſuch Horrid and Miſchievous Sins; only take care your Complaints of this kind proceed not from private Reſentments, but from a Concern for the Honour of God, and the Good of your Neighbours. And that this may appear unto all, abſtain ſtrictly from all thoſe Faults you pretend to diſcourage in others, and be conſtant Examples of thoſe Vertues you won'd recommend; let your whole Converſation be ſuch as becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt, and ſtrive to adorn the Doctrine of our Saviour in all Things that you ſay or do. Take particular care to give thoſe you have Anſwered for in Baptiſm, good Impreſſions of it, that they may be led to the faithful Performance of their own Vows, by obſerving your Conſcientious Diſcharge of yours, and your more eſpecial Concern to make thoſe Religious who do more immediately belong to you; which brings me to the laſt Advice I propoſed touching.

4. Your Behaviour toward your ſelves and Families. As to what touches your ſelves, ſo much of it has naturally fallen under the foregoing Heads that I ſhall recommend to you, the chief only of thoſe perſonal Vertues, without which you can never be ſure of diſcharging your other Duties, I mean *Humility*, *Temperance*, and *Diligence*. Have always ſober and modeſt thoughts of your ſelves, that you may not be Tempted to meddle with things that are too high for you, nor to withhold your Obedience from them to whom it is due, but may walk with all lowlineſs and meekneſs, obſerving the Rules of the Place where you live. And that you may not be ſuddenly carried away into the Tranſgreſſion of any of the Laws you are under, take care to be Temperate in all things, in drink particularly, that you do not drown your Reaſon, and tranſport your ſelves into furious and unmanly Paſſions; beſides the Sin of this Exceſs, it expoſes you to all other follies, and dangers of ſeveral kinds, to the hazard of Quarrels, and whatever miſchiefs may

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follow from them; the Evil consequences of drunkenness, are too many to be here insisted upon, it impairs the health of the Body, sullies the Reputation, wastes the Fortune, obstructs Business, and is all these, and many other ways prejudicial to the Souls of Men: Avoid it therefore by all means, and Idleness as a great occasion of it; every Man has enough to do, if he will but think of it, without his mispending his Mony and Time. Be diligent therefore in your Callings, that you may shut out all such disorders, and may have to give to all that need without wronging your Family, who are to stand first in your Care. If you are in Wedlock, be sure that the Vows of Marriage be strictly observed, and that that Holy State be rendered as Comfortable as mutual Fidelity and Kindness with Religion can make it, and nothing can make you happier in this World, or put you into a better condition for the next, than a concurrence of these. Your Children are to have the next place in your Thoughts, and let them have as much of your Company as you can, no body else being either so well affected toward them, or having such a concern in their behaving themselves as they should. Engage them by all the Methods of a Prudent Kindness to love you, that you may have the fuller Authority with them, Which you are always to use for their good: Take all the fair occasions of instructing them with that Sweetness of Temper, as may encourage their further enquiries to the increase of their Knowledge; lay the Foundation of their improvements this way, in giving them as they are capable of it, right and worthy Notions of God, his Power, Wisdom, and Goodness; possess them with an early sense of his Eye being over them in every place, of his approving all their good Actions, and observing with displeasure their bad. That so they may always think of him with Fear, and speak of him with Honour; Represent to them the satisfaction and honour that attends Piety and Vertue at present, as well as the infinite Reward they will meet with hereafter; on the other hand, shew them the Trouble and Shame that follow a sinful course of Life in this World,

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and the dreadful Puniſhment in the next. For their Confirmation in theſe things, let them be taught as ſoon as they are able to learn, the nature of the Vow made in their Baptiſm, and the other principles of Religion, as they are laid down in the Catechiſm, that at fit age they may take it upon themſelves, and receive the bleſſing of God by the Biſhop to eſtabliſh them in it. Give them in all things as good an Education as your condition will bear, and breed them up to ſuch Employments as are ſuitable to your Circumſtances, their Capacity and Inclinations: While they are in your Houſe teach them to be obedient to their Parents, and let no thing irregular appear in your own conducts, to leſſen your Authority with them. Uſe them to a great modeſty of behaviour toward all Men, eſpecially toward their Superiours of any kind, and never ſuffer them to jeſt or ſcoff at the Age, Weakneſs, Infirmities, or Poverty of any; but teach them compaſſion in all theſe Caſes, and often make them the diſtributers of your Charity, to thoſe that want. Accuſtom them to what is Ingenious and Manly, and to moderate hardſhip, that they may never decline thro' ſoftneſs, what is fit for them to do. Get the beſt Companions for them you can, that they be not corrupted by thoſe that come to Divert them: And the better to ſecure them againſt this, Watch over their Paſſions, that in particular which you find moſt Predominant in them, and rather lead it off another way, then ſet your ſelves directly againſt it, unleſs when it has actually broke out into ſome Exceſs; and then you muſt come to Correction, but with ſuch Mildneſs and Gravity, that they may be ſenſible it proceeds not from any Humour, or diſorderly Anger in you, but from calm judgment, and tenderneſs for them, which is to be ſhewn by continuing a prudent diſpleaſure, till you ſee they begin to amend. When by this care you have brought them into the World with all the advantage you can; provide for their Marriage in a way agreeable to them, making the Vertue, and ſuitable temper of the Perſons the Chief ground of your Choice; including ways an agreement of Opinion about the Worſhip of God,

God, without which the peace and unity of Wedlock can ſcarce be maintain'd, nor the Children of it, brought up in that regular way of Religion, which their welfare requires: But in the diſpoſal of your Children this way, never force them againſt their declared Inclinations, nor oppoſe theirs to the utmoſt, but when they are very unreaſonable indeed, and plainly deſtructive. After, and with your Children, your Servants muſt be alſo conſidered, as part of your Charge, and have all the opportunities and means of Religion that have been propoſed for the others; reſpect being had to their different Relation, and buſineſs. But tho' the Service they do you is part of their Duty to God, yet you muſt not let it ſo Engroſs all their time, as to leave them none, or but little for that which is properly ſo. It is your Advantage as much as Duty, to have them Religious; for beſides the Comforts you will have in making them ſo, it will engage them to be more faithful to you in the diſcharge of their Truſt. And their being made ſenſible that they are to give an Account hereafter of their behaviour here, will make them ſerve you, not with Eye-ſervice as Men-pleaſers, but with ſingleneſs of Heart fearing God. Charge them therefore to be conſtant in their Morning and Evening-Devotions, and keep them to a Religious obſervance of the Lord's day, according to the Advice I gave you above. Encourage their Learning to Read and Write, and allow them a convenient time for it: Exhort them to ſpend their ſpare Hours in the plaineſt parts of the Holy Scripture, and in other good Books, that they may underſtand their Religion, and having been Confirmed in it by the Biſhop, may be further prepared to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Caution them againſt all Evil Company, eſpecially ſuch as have formerly been Servants, and are now Idle, and Diſſolute; becauſe they above others will endeavour to ſpoil them, and make them ſuch as themſelves, Tempting them to Lye and Swear, and it may be to Steal, and go on in ſuch ways of Deſtruction. That you may the better keep your Servants in their Duty, make them love you, by uſing them well in all other reſpects, providing things neceſſary

for them, and punctually paying them their Wages, treating them with gentleneſs upon little Miſcarriges, and forbearing threatning without great occaſion, remembring that you your ſelves have a Maſter in Heaven: Let both your Children and them ſee that you think often upon him, and treat his Name, and whatever belongs to him, with that Reverence you require of them: Convince them by a ſerious behaviour through out, that your Endeavour to ſhew them the Way in which you would have them to go, by walking ſtedfaſtly in it your ſelves, and beg the Bleſſing of God upon all that you do, as well in your private as your Family-Prayers, which for the ſake of your ſelves, your Children, and Servants, you are to be regular in, that you may preſerve this Duty of owning your common dependance on God, from the hazard of being omitted, by being left at uncertainty; that you may at ſuch time, ſee your Family together, and uſe them to order, and have opportunity of giving them any common inſtructions, when their united Devotions have prepared them to receive it with the purer affection. Theſe and many more Advantages there are in keeping up Family-Prayers, for which you may be provided by ſome proper Collects out of the Common-Prayer-Book, or other Books put out for that purpoſe. Whatever Prayers you take I beſeech God to bleſs you in the uſe of them, and that I may not ſeem to be wholly wanting to your Aſſiſtance in this matter I have ſubjoyned to this Letter two or three Forms which with very little alteration may ſerve for Private, or Family-Prayers.

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A Morning-Prayer.

O Glorious and most merciful God! I adore thy Infinite Majesty. And beg leave to offer my most humble Thanks for thy great Goodness towards me from the first Moment of my Being to this very Minute. That thou hast been graciously pleased to watch over me this Night, and bring me safe to the beginning of this Day. Grant that the consideration of thy great Mercy towards me, may work in me a thankful disposition of Mind, and that a due sense of my own unworthiness of such undeserved Favours may lead me to a sincere and speedy Repentance, acceptably expres'd by Reformation and Amendment, that I may forsake, as well as confess my Sins, and be effectually prevail'd on by all the sweet and powerful Motives of my Holy Religion, to deny all ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live godlily, righteously and soberly in this corrupt and sinful World, with the well-grounded Hopes and Expectations of a Glorious Inheritance hereafter with the Sons of Light.

Let thy Holy Spirit in all Things direct and rule my Heart, fortifie my Soul with thy Heavenly Grace against those Sins and Passions to which I am most exposed, cleanse me from my secret Faults, and grant that presumptuous Sins may never have dominion over me. Keep me ever mindful of thy Presence, of the shortness and great uncertainty of my Life, and of the Day of Judgment; that I may be evermore watchful and circumspect in my ways, that I offend not Thee, my Good God, wrong my Neighbour, or injure my own Soul in Thought, Word, or Deed. Endue me with an humble Resignation of my Will and Affections to thy Divine disposal, and fit me for every State and alteration of Condition, that Thou thro' thy good Providence shall be pleased to call me to, more especially for the Hour of Death, and the Day of Judgment. Make me evermore to love what thou dost Command, and heartily to desire a participation of thy heavenly Promises, that so among all the various changes of this frail State, my Heart may there be surely fix'd where true Joys are to be found. &c.

In Mercy be pleased, O Lord, to hear, and accept my humble Prayers for the whole Race of Mankind, for all Christ himself

Churches, more especially for this whereof I am an unworthy Member. For the Preservation, long Life, and Happiness of our King, for thy Blessing on the Royal Family, and all in Authority under his Sacred Majesty, both in Church and State, for all the Ministers of thy Holy Word and Sacraments, more especially for him to whose care my Soul is committed, that they may all of them in their several Stations be influenc'd by thy Divine Grace in all their Actions and Undertakings, and in the whole Course of their Lives consult and promote thy Glory, the Honour and Flourishing State of thy Church, the encouragement of Piety and Vertue, the Happiness of this Kingdom, and the Eternal Salvation of their own Souls.

Let thy Blessings descend on my Friends and Relations, reward all their Kindness to me a Thousand fold. Convert and pardon my Enemies, Bless me in my Business and Employment this Day, that I may discharge my self uprightly, and inoffensively toward thee my God, and all Mankind, preserve me from all evil Temptations and Dangers, furnish my Thoughts with such Holy Meditations, as may tend to the improvement of my Spiritual State, go in and out with me, and be my merciful God, give me Grace in every thing to approve my self thy Faithful Servant, chearfully performing every good Work that Thou wouldest have done, and so passing thro' Things Temporal, that I may in thy due time, have a Portion in a Glorious Eternity. These things, and whatever else Thou in thy infinite Wisdom knowest most necessary for me, which either for my Ignorance I cannot, or Unworthiness dare not ask, vouchsafe, Gracious God, to Grant me for the sake and Merits of my Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who has Taught me thus to pray, Our Father, *&c.*

A Prayer to be added on Sunday-Morning.

O Holy and Eternal God, be pleased to accept of my humble thanks for giving me the hopes of spending another Lord's Day in thy more immediate service. Pardon I beseech thee all the Sins and Miscarriages of the Week, and my Life past. Grant me Grace to keep this day in a Religious and devout manner, in some measure proportionable to the Holiness of it, those great Benefits we commemorate in our Lord Jesus's

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glorious Resurrection, whereby he compleated the merciful work of our Redemption. That I may lay aside all vain and worldly Thoughts, that I may rise from the grave of Sin to the Life of Righteousness; adoring thy Perfections, admiring thy Mercies, and pursuing the interest of thy eternal Kingdom. Grant thy Blessing and gracious influence may be with all Christian Assemblies that meet to serve thee this Day: more especially that wherewith I am to joyn, that with pure Hearts, and inflamed Affections we may Worship and Adore thee our good and merciful God. Grant that our sins may not hang as Clouds between Heaven and us, to hinder the effectual ascending of our Prayers, or the descending of thy Blessings on us and our service. Especially I pray a gracious Assistance may be granted our Minister in a faithful, and successful discharge of the several parts of his Holy Office. Put all our Souls into a due frame, and diligent attention in all the parts of our Publick Duty; so that thy Name may be truly glorified, thy Church edify'd, and our Souls nourish'd with the saving Truth of the Christian Doctrine, built up in an Holy Faith, Humble Hope and Charity, on the Rock of our Salvation, and evermore influenced with the refreshing Graces, and Blessings of thy Holy Spirit, till we come to be Translated to keep an eternal Sabbath in the Kingdom of our glorified Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

An Evening-Prayer.

O Eternal and most Holy God, I humbly beseech thee look down with the Eye of Mercy and Compassion upon me thy polluted Creature, who am not worthy to look up to Heaven, or to make my approaches to thy Glorious Majesty, whom I have grievously offended by my so often repeated Sins and follies, against the tender Motions of thy Holy Spirit; against the serious Checks of my own Conscience; against my former Resolutions; against the gracious Offers of Mercy, and terrible Threats of Judgments, have I perversly broken thy holy Laws: So that if thou should'st be severe to mark what I have done amiss, how am I able to appear before thee! But O thou preserver of Men, with thee there is mercy, that thou may'st be fear'd: I humbly prostrate my self before

before thee, begging for thine infinite Compassion, for the great Merits and Sufferings of thy dear Son our Lord Jesus Christ, that thou would'st not enter into Judgment with thy Servant, or be severe in punishing as I deserve. In mercy to my poor Soul raise in me a due sight and sense of my Sins, hearty contrition and godly sorrow, holy and stedfast purposes of amendment, that I may give a bill of divorce to all my corrupt and darling Affections, that I may never more be at an agreement with any thing that shall have the least tendency to deprive me of the Love and Favour of thee my gracious God. Let the Strength and Power of thy Divine Grace be manifested in my weakness. And whereever by my Nature, habit of Living, Company, or Business, I am most liable to Temptations and danger, there be pleas'd to strengthen me in doubling my care and watchfulness: There grant me the most Christian Courage, and thy special Aid. Raise my Affections to spiritual Objects, that I may improve the remaining Portion of my Life with all possible care and diligence for the making my Calling and Election sure. That I may on no account distrust thy Mercy, defer my Repentance, or depend on any vain confidence, but be continually working out my Salvation with Fear and Trembling, that I may be fit to die when thou shalt be pleased to call for me.

I humbly pray, that the mercies of thy Gospel may be as extensive as thy Providence: That all the Nations of the World may be brought to the saving Knowledge of thy Truth; and that all who call on thy Name may depart from Iniquity. Unite all the Members of thy Church in soundness of Doctrine, Holiness of Life, and Brotherly Love. Especially, bless with the dew of thy Heavenly Grace this part of thy Church whereof I am an unworthy Member, heal our Breaches, and make up all our Divisions, and unite us with one heart and mind to serve thee the Living God. Grant thy watchful Providence may evermore defend the Sacred Person of our King against all Conspiracies and Treasons, enlighten him with thy Grace, and Confirme him in thy Goodness, that thy Glory, the honour of Religion, the encouragement of Piety, Vertue and Learning, the Peace and Happiness of his

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People may evermore be his aim; and after a long and happy Reign, Crown him with Immortal Happiness. Bless all those in Authority under him in Church and State, in the Religious Conscientious, and Exemplary discharge of their Duties. Bless all Ranks and Conditions of Mankind, that they may live in thy Fear and die in thy Favour.

In Mercy look down upon all the Sons and Daughters of Affliction, thou knowest the Wants and Necessities of all People, and thou art a God All-sufficient, I beseech thee administer unto every one as Thou in thy Divine Wisdom knowest best, and most expedient for them, and grant that all thy fatherly Chastisements may tend to the welfare, and Salvation of their Souls.

Bless and reward all my Relations, Friends and Benefactors, and grant that my ways may be so pleasing to Thee, that even my Enemies may be at peace with me, however in mercy forgive them. And now Lord, accept of my unfeigned Thanks for the Mercies of this Day, and all my Life past, who notwithstanding my unworthiness hast hitherto been so patient toward me, that when thou might'st have long since justly consumed me, thou hast not so much as withdrawn thy goodness, nor punished my great abuse of these Earthly Blessings, by taking them from me. In much Mercy continue thy Favour and Loving-kindness towards me, and increase my Love and Obedience. Take me into thy merciful Care and Protection this Night and evermore, deliver me from the evil Suggestions of Satan, from the Deceits and Violence of Wicked Men, from all frightful Dreams and Snares of Darkness; Make my Sleep comfortable, and refreshing to me, and bless my Soul whenever I awake with pious Meditations, that, thro' thy Mercy I may be raised in the Morning the better enabled to serve thee in my Calling and Employment in Truth and Righteousness. All which I humbly beg for the Sake and Mediation of thy dearly beloved Son my blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in whose All-prevailing Name and Words, I conclude these my imperfect Prayers. Our Father, &c.

A Prayer to be added on Sunday-Evening.

ACcept also O Lord our humble and hearty thanks, not only for our Preservation this Day, but the blessed opportunity we have had in it; of assembling our selves before thee in the publick Ordinances of thy Church; for the advantages we have there Enjoyed of making solemn confession of our Sins, and imploring thy Pardon, for the benefit of hearing thy Word, and the honour and joy of praising thy Name: For our being allowed and assisted in our putting up our Supplications and Prayers, for our Spiritual and Temporal Wants, and making Intercessions for others. Pardon, O Lord, the Wanderings and coldness of our publick and private Devotions, and our small improvements under these Great Blessings thou hast favour'd us with. Let the sense of it make us more careful to profit under all that thou shalt hereafter vouchsafe us the return of, and let the Impressions thy Holy Spirit has made on us this Day, grow every Day stronger upon us, and keep us more firmly in thy Obedience and Love, the rest of the Week, that so every Christian Sabbath we keep may make us still fitter to be received into thy Eternal Rest. Grant this O Lord, for the Sake of thy Son Christ Jesus, Amen.

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